AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1-22.   (canceled).

23.   (currently amended): A method for supplying a new expendable by a computer, the new expendable being packaged in a new expendable container, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) accepting an inquiry regarding supply of the new expendable, the inquiry including expendable-related information indicative of a model of an expendable container possessed by a user;

(b) determining a first type price at which the new expendable is to be supplied on condition that the expendable container possessed by the user is returned in response to the inquiry;

(c) displaying the first type price to the user;

(d) accepting a first type order from the user, the first type order generating a charge amount at the first type price on condition that the expendable container possessed by the user is returned; and

(e) supplying the new expendable in exchange for the expendable container possessed by the user in response to the first type order;

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wherein the expendable-related information further includes information indicative of a

remaining amount of expendable remaining in the expendable container and unsealing date

information indicative of an unsealing date of the expendable; and

the step (c) further includes the steps of:

selecting at least one new expendable from a plurality of types of expendables of

different volume based on the remaining amount information; and

displaying the selected new expendable as a recommended expendable..

24.   (original): The method in accordance with claim 23 wherein

the expendable container comprises a memory for storing the expendable-related

information, and

the expendable-related information is to be read out from the memory.

25.   (original): The method in accordance with claim 23 wherein

the step (b) includes the steps of:

verifying whether the first type order has been submitted to the supplier for the

expendable container before; and

determining the first type price if the first type order has not been submitted before, while

determining a second type price if the first type order has been submitted before, the second type

price at which the new expendable is to be supplied on condition that the expendable container

possessed by the user is NOT returned;

the step (d) includes a step of accepting the first type order if the first price has been

determined, while accepting the second type order if the second price has been determined, the

second type order generating a charge amount at the second type price in response to the price

determination; and

step (e) includes a step of supplying the new expendable in response to the second order.

26.   (original): The method in accordance with claim 25 wherein

the step (b) further includes a step of providing the user with options of the first type

order and the second type order if the first type order has not been submitted before; and

the step (d) further includes a step of accepting the first type order if the first price has

been selected, while accepting the second type order if the second price has been selected, in

response to a selection of the options.

27.   (canceled).

28.   (currently amended): The method in accordance with claim ~~27~~ 23 wherein

the step (c) further includes a step of displaying an expendable supply menu for

supplying expendable if the remaining amount falls below a predetermined value.

29.   (canceled).

30.   (currently amended): A computer program product for causing a computer to accept an order for a new expendable, the new expendable being packaged in a new expendable container, the computer program product comprising:

a computer readable medium; and

a computer program stored on the computer readable medium, the computer program comprising:

a first program for causing the computer to accept an inquiry regarding supply of the new expendable, the inquiry including expendable-related information indicative of a model of an expendable container possessed by a user;

a second program for causing the computer to determine a price at which the new expendable is to be supplied on condition that the expendable container possessed by the user is returned in response to the inquiry;

a third program for causing the computer to control a display of the price to the user; and

a fourth program for causing the computer to accept the order from the user;

wherein the order generates a charge amount on condition that the expendable container possessed by the user is returned,

the expendable-related information further includes information indicative of a remaining amount of expendable remaining in the expendable container and unsealing date information indicative of a unsealing date of the expendable; and

the third program further comprises:

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<u>   a program for causing the computer to select at least one new expendable from a</u>

<u>plurality of types of expendables of different volume based on the remaining amount</u>

<u>information; and</u>

<u>   a program for causing the computer to display the selected new expendable as a</u>

<u>recommended expendable</u>.

31.   (canceled).

32.   (currently amended): The computer program product in accordance with claim ~~31~~

<u>30</u> wherein

the third program further comprises a program for causing the computer to display an

expendable supply menu for supplying expendable if the remaining amount falls below a

predetermined value.

33.   (canceled).